Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) In a packet switched network a method of encoding speech packets into blocks, each speech packet including a speech header and a payload comprised of a speech frame, wherein at least two speech frames are encoded into a single block~~.~~, wherein each speech frame includes a set of Class I bits and a set of Class II bits, the method comprising:

encoding a first speech packet by encoding at least a portion of the header using a block code or convolutional code and the set of Class I bits using a convolutional code;

encoding a second speech packet by encoding at least a portion of the header using a block code or convolutional code and the set of Class I bits using a convolutional code;

not using a convolutional code or block code to encode the Class II bits.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein each speech frame is associated with different users.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein each speech frame is associated with the same user.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein a speech header associated with only one speech frame is encoded.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein each speech frame is generated by a full-rate encoder.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein each speech frame is generated by a half-rate encoder.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 in which four speech frames are encoded into a block.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the speech frames are for transmission on the down-link of a wireless packet switched network.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~9~~1 wherein each encoding step comprises encoding two different portions of each header using two different encoding techniques.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~9~~1 wherein the Class I bits and a portion of each header are encoded using a convolution code.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 wherein the remainder of the header is encoded using a block code.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10 in which the two speech frames are arranged, prior to encoding, such that they are adjacent.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10 in which the two speech frames are arranged, prior to encoding, such that the Class I bits of the two users are adjacent thereby forming a first and second set of sequential Class I bits.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, in which the last n bits of the first sequential set of Class I bits are removed prior to encoding, wherein the n bits correspond to n zero bits provided for an encoder with a constrain length of n+1.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10 in which the coding step further involves the step of puncturing bits.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 17 wherein only ~~the~~ a convolution code for encoding the Class I bits involves puncturing of bits.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the speech frames are for up-link transmission ~~on the up-link~~ of the packet radio network, wherein the Class I bits and the header are encoded using a convolution code.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 in which the single block includes a set of spare bits.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the speech frames are for transmission on the up-link of the packet radio network,

22. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein the Class I bits and the header of each speech frame are encoded using a convolution code.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, the encoding step further involving the step of puncturing bits.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 in which the single block additionally includes a set of stealing bits.

25. (New) In a packet switched network a method of encoding speech packets into blocks, each speech packet including a speech header and a payload comprised of a speech frame, wherein at least two speech frames are encoded into a single block,

wherein each of the speech frames is associated with a different user,

wherein each speech frame includes a set of Class I bits and a set of Class II bits, the method comprising:

arranging the two speech frames, prior to encoding, such that the Class I bits of the two users are adjacent thereby forming a first and second set of sequential Class I bits;

removing the last n bits of the first sequential set of Class I bits prior to encoding, wherein the n bits correspond to n zero bits provided for an encoder with a constraint length of n+1,

encoding a first speech packet by encoding at least a portion of the header and the set of Class I bits using a block code or convolutional code; encoding a second speech packet by encoding at least a portion of the header and the set of Class I bits using a convolutional code; not using a convolutional code or block code to encode the Class II bits.